



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Coalition to Empower our Future

**Re:** TX Parents Call for a Comprehensive Approach to Solving the Youth Mental Health Crisis

**Date:** May 2025

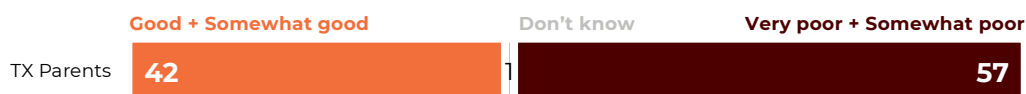
In advance of Mental Health Awareness Month, the Coalition to Empower our Future conducted conversations with parents across Texas to discuss the state of youth mental health and wellbeing. Additionally, in partnership with Mercury Analytics, the coalition conducted an online survey among 600 parents in Texas from April 7 to 14, 2025.

This research finds that parents in Texas are worried about the state of youth mental health and wellbeing, agree there are many factors driving the issue, and are seeking a multifaceted approach that includes support and resources to help them support their kids.

### Key Research Findings:

**Youth mental health is seen as a deteriorating and pervasive challenge that is unlikely to improve in the foreseeable future.** Survey data shows that Texas parents are worried about youth mental health and wellbeing – the vast majority say the situation is bad and not improving. In the coalition’s conversations with parents across Texas, many express a similar sentiment, saying things that indicate the situation “*needs a lot of attention.*”

**Q:** HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE STATE OF YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE U.S. TODAY?



**Q:** THINKING BACK TO 6 MONTHS AGO, DO YOU THINK YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE U.S. HAS...



**Q:** THINKING AHEAD 6 MONTHS FROM NOW, DO YOU THINK YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE U.S. WILL BE...



## QUOTES FROM PARENTS

*"Overall, youth mental health really needs a lot of attention." – TX Parent*

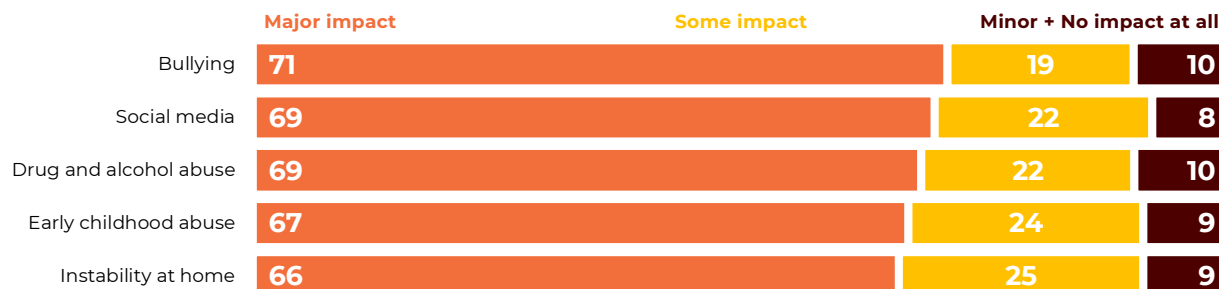
*"I work with youth, so, I get to see the ins and outs of what they're dealing with, and they're so worried about their peers constantly. There's a lot of anxiety. They're always stressed." – TX Parent*

*"[Youth mental health] is a little bit worse now. We had stress when we were kids but I think technology and the lack of social skills adds more stress to [kids today]." – TX Parent*

### Texas parents think a broad range of factors is causing the decline in youth mental health.

The vast majority of parents in Texas recognize that youth mental health is a complex and multifaceted issue. In both survey research and in the coalition's conversations across the state, parents cite a broad array of drivers, including bullying, social media, drugs and alcohol, early childhood abuse, instability at home, etc.

**Q:** PLEASE INDICATE HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT YOU WOULD SAY EACH FACTOR HAS ON YOUTH IN THE U.S. RIGHT NOW.<sup>1</sup>



## QUOTES FROM PARENTS

*"The reasoning behind [worsening youth mental health] is multifaceted. Kids have a lot more to worry about nowadays than a lot of us did. My kids and their friends have all experienced extreme anxiety, depression, and things like that." – TX Parent*

*"There's an immense amount of pressure that these kids face from school. Even my own children. For example, they have to be elite level dancers, and they're 10. I've heard it's the same for kids in other sports." – TX Parent*

*"It's a multitude of things that's causing mental illness in youth. Technology is one of them." – TX Parent*

### When it comes to tackling youth mental health, Texas parents are looking for a comprehensive approach.

Parents say youth mental health and wellbeing is a complicated problem, requiring a multifaceted solution. Survey data shows that more than eight-in-ten parents in Texas support a comprehensive approach over a narrow approach targeting phones and similar devices. And in the coalition's conversations across the state, parents have expressed that a broad range of solutions and approaches is necessary.

**Q:** WHEN IT COMES TO IMPROVING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST APPROACH?



## QUOTES FROM PARENTS

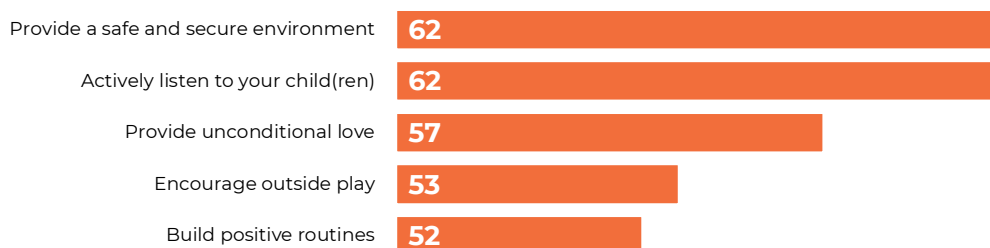
*"Even if you find a solution, it may work for a little while or for some children, but then if anxiety or a new issue crops up, then you may have to find a different solution. [The approach] has to stay pretty fluid." – TX Parent*

*"Because there are so many things that contribute to anxiety and other mental health struggles that our kids go through, I don't think it's any one thing that is necessarily the cause of every child's experience." – TX Parent*

*"It's a lot of things, not just social media." – TX Parent*

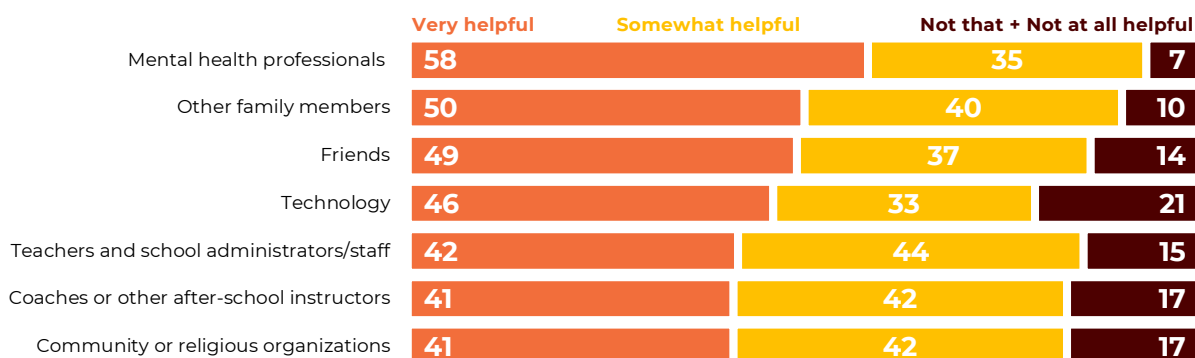
**Texas parents feel extremely responsible for youth mental health, and they are trying to provide their kids with the support systems they need.** Parents want to support their child or children's mental health. In the coalition's conversations across Texas, parents say they want to "be a safe space," and "a teacher" for their kids. These conversations are backed up by survey data that says many parents in Texas are actively trying to implement strategies to support their kids – for example, by providing stable and communicative environments.

**Q: HOW DO YOU PERSONALLY SUPPORT YOUR CHILD OR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING?'**



**Texas parents rely on support from a broad range of resources and people.** In both survey data and the coalition's conversations with parents across Texas, parents say they rely on their community to help them support their child or children's mental health. For example, parents in Texas are relying on mental health experts, family members, and friends.

**Q: HOW HELPFUL IS THE SUPPORT FROM EACH RESOURCE?'**



## QUOTES FROM PARENTS

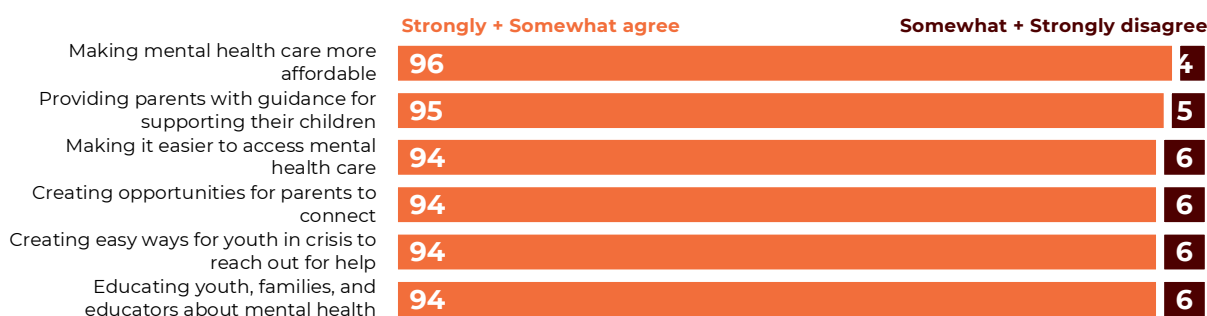
*"I would start with my kid's doctor then maybe a church pastor." – TX Parent*

*"I trust my mom to teach them and their teachers. They've had great teachers before and now, so I trust them and think they're a good example for my kids." – TX Parent*

*“My kids are the only grandkids in the family, so they have a really good connection with their grandparents. And they’re really close to their aunts, so they can use them as a sounding board as well.” – TX Parent*

**When it comes to protecting youth mental health and wellbeing, Texas parents are looking for support from their community.** In the coalition’s conversations across Texas, parents report they have trouble finding the right tools and resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of their kids. They say it’s hard to know where to look, find credible expertise, access professional support, and know if they are doing the right thing. Survey data backs up the sentiment that parents need more support – for example, the data demonstrates that parents want youth mental health support to be more affordable and accessible.

**Q:** HERE IS A LIST OF STRATEGIES. PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE IF EACH WOULD HELP IMPROVE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.<sup>ii</sup>



### QUOTES FROM PARENTS

*“There are organizations and resources out there but it’s hard to find them and know where to look. Those programs are often stretched super thin. I remember calling a behavioral health center who had us on a waiting list but I never got a call back.” – TX Parent*

*“With my daughter, I was calling around doctors’ offices and trying to research things on my own. The doctors had three to six month waiting lists so I was horrified that this is what we have to deal with to get help. It’s a huge problem.” – TX Parent*

*“There are only so many people [organizations] are going to help, and then it’s just backlogs. So, you’re just stuck and hope for somebody to help you.” – TX Parent*

<sup>i</sup> Chart displays items that only rise to the top among nationwide parents.

<sup>ii</sup> Chart displays data from a selection of key strategies.